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PERIODICAL READING ROOM

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ANALYSIS COMPETITION—" PROBLEM " No. 13

The thirteenth " problem " is set by Professor P. H. Nowell-Smith, of Leicester, and is as follows:

" Is ' Paradise Lost ' a general name, proper name, or what? "

Entries (of not more than 600 words), accompanied by stamped, addressed envelope or international stamp voucher if the return of MSS. is desired, should be sent to **The Editor of ANALYSIS by Friday, June 27th, 1958.** *No entries should be sent to Professor Nowell-Smith.* Contributors may submit entries either under their own names or under a pseudonym. A report, with any winning entries, will be published in ANALYSIS for October, 1958.

Professor J. L. Austin's report on " Problem " No. 12 will appear in the next (April) issue of ANALYSIS.

THE EDITOR.

CONTRADICTION: ' LAW ' OR ' CONVENTION '?

By C. A. CAMPBELL

TO the present writer (and, he believes, to a good many other persons) one of the most puzzling aspects of the contemporary scene in philosophy is the continued attraction, for an important minority, of the doctrine that logical ' laws ', including what used to be called ' laws of thought ', are in fact merely conventional rules of linguistic usage, which we generally find it convenient to agree to adopt, but which, being conventions only, have in them no inherent necessity. The case against such a view seems, at first sight at any rate, so crystal clear and so compelling. The gist of it might perhaps be stated as follows. Granting that logic has to do with ' discourse ', that discourse must be *intelligible* discourse. Hence any speech conventions which a specific logic prescribes must be such that if we speak in terms of them we speak intelligibly. But *do* we speak intelligibly

—do we convey any determinate meaning even to ourselves—if we adopt a convention such as ' p does not exclude not-p '? If, for example, you say "Ayer is a philosopher", and this proposition is, in accordance with your convention, compatible with "Ayer is not a philosopher", is it not obvious beyond argument that what you are saying has no significance whatever? But if so, it would seem that, in logic, we are *obliged* to accept the rule ' p excludes not-p '; and if we are obliged to accept it, it is not a *convention*. It is a necessary rule for intelligible discourse—' necessary ', because we are just not able to think save in terms of it. But this is really equivalent to saying that it is a ' law of thought '.

I want to raise this topic once more in connection with a passage in the B.B.C. debate on Logical Positivism between Professor Ayer and Father Copleston (now for the first time available in print.[1] Whether the debate was scripted or unscripted I do not know; but in any event its publication presumably implies, in the absence of specific disclaimers, that the participants are reasonably satisfied that what appears represents their considered views.

In the course of the debate Ayer agrees that one can't admit the possibility of a piece of paper's being white and not-white at the same time " given existing conventions about the use of the word ' not ' ". He goes on " But of course you could perfectly well introduce a convention by which it would be meaningful. Suppose you chose, when the paper was grey, to say it was white and not-white. Then you would have altered your logic. But given that you're using a logic in which you exclude ' p and not-p ', then of course you exclude the paper's being white and not-white ".[2]

It seems to me that this argument is plausible only to the extent that it is ambiguous. It is intended, I take it, to show by an example (the grey paper) how it *is* possible to assert a self-contradiction intelligibly, if you alter your logic. Now it is true that the proposition " this piece of (grey) paper is both white and not-white " can be given a meaning in which we should all agree that it is intelligible to assert it. But in this meaning, unfortunately, the proposition is not self-contradictory, and the example is therefore irrelevant to the question whether we can intelligibly assert what is self-contradictory. If, on the other hand, the proposition be interpreted, more naturally, in a way in

[1] In *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy*, edited by Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap pp. 586–618.

[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 598–9.

which it *is* self-contradictory, nothing that Ayer here says, so far as I can see, has any tendency to show that it is intelligible to assert it.

A possible meaning of the proposition which would make its assertion intelligible is this. We are all familiar with the mixing of paints on a palette, and we know that by mixing ' white ' with ' not-white ' (e.g. black) we get ' grey '. We can, therefore, ' choose to say '—and still talk good, if slightly peculiar sense—that a piece of grey paper is both white and not-white (at the same time), meaning thereby that the grey appearance of the paper comes about by the physical mixing of white and not-white constitutents. Since, however, the proposition as so understood can be intelligibly asserted in a perfectly straightforward way—with no ' alteration of our logic ', for no self-contradiction is involved—the fact that we can ' admit the possibility of a piece of paper's being white and not-white at the same time ' in *this* sense has no bearing on Copleston's problem.

Doubtless one could invent other unusual meanings for the proposition about the grey paper, in terms of which we could also ' choose to assert ' it and still talk sense. But unless the proposition, in such meanings, involves a self-contradiction, its intelligibility will be irrelevant to any attempt to exhibit a kind of ' thinking ' which abandons existing conventions in favour of a new convention by which p does not exclude not-p.

The ' plain ' meaning of the proposition about the grey paper is, of course, that the paper has, at the same time and all over, the sensory appearance ' white ' and the sensory appearance ' not-white '. What we want to know is how it is possible to assert the proposition intelligibly in *this* meaning; and my difficulty is to see how Ayer's argument helps us in any way.

For it is no good telling us that we can intelligibly assert it if only we adopt the new convention that p does not exclude not-p, unless we are also told how we *can* adopt this new convention—can adopt it, that is to say, as a ' logical ' convention, a rule for conducting intelligible intercourse, not just a rule for manipulating marks on paper. The marks as mere marks, presumably everyone will agree, have no interest for logic. For logic their significance is as *symbols*; and, on this account, what is said about them, or what we are told to do with them, must be capable of intelligible translation in terms of what the symbols symbolise. A ' rule of use ' which cannot be so translated ought not, it seems to me, to be called a ' logical ' rule, for the marks are then *not* being treated as symbols. It may be a rule for

playing a more or less interesting game, but the game is not logic. To apply this to the case before us, a convention like ' p is to be treated as not excluding not-p ' is apt to *seem* intelligible because, as a rule governing the permissible moves in a game in which ' p ' and ' not-p ' are mere ' counters ', it *is* intelligible. But to ascertain whether it is an intelligible rule for *logic*, we have to ask ourselves whether it makes sense when ' p ' and ' not- p ' are regarded no longer as mere counters but as symbols. The situation then becomes very different. When we translate the symbols in terms of what they are supposed to symbolise we find, it seems to me, that the ' game ' is not playable according to the proposed rule. The rule is ostensibly a rule for intelligible discourse, but what we seem to find is that discourse just ceases to be intelligible if we try to treat any given proposition's being true as compatible with that same proposition's being false.

There is one way, of course, in which we *could* intelligibly assert ' p and not-p '; namely, by giving a *new meaning* to the word ' not '. We might agree to understand by ' not ', say, ' either identical with or different from '. Then certainly it is intelligible to assert ' p and not-p '. If *that* is the sort of thing that is meant by altering " existing conventions about the use of the word ' not ' ", then of course, by such alteration, we *can* intelligibly assert that a piece of paper is at the same time both white all over and not-white all over. But what we shall be doing in this manoeuvre is not to alter our logic, but merely to alter the English language. We are *not* adopting a new convention whereby a proposition does not exclude its contradictory, for, on the new meaning of ' not ', ' not-p ' is no longer the contradictory of ' p '. The question whether we can intelligibly assert a contradiction—' p and not-p ' in the ordinary sense of ' not '—is therefore not touched. If, on the other hand, the ' conventionalist ' logician is prepared to agree that in the *ordinary* meaning of ' not ' we cannot meaningfully assert ' p and not-p ', why, that is surely all that advocates of the traditional view have meant when they argued that there is a *law* of contradiction, and that it is a law of *thought*.

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ARE CONDITIONALS PRINCIPLES OF INFERENCE?

By HECTOR NERI CASTANEDA

MY purpose in this note is to examine some of the most powerful arguments yet presented against the view that conditional statements are principles of inference, since Gilbert Ryle put it forward in "'If', 'So' and 'Because'" (*Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Max Black, pp. 323–340). Those arguments are found in Romane Clark's "Natural Inference" (*Mind*, LXV (1956), pp. 455–472).[1]

I am convinced that there is a sense in which conditionals *function* as principles of inference, even though Clark has argued very forcefully to show that conditionals "lack the features of rules and principles, their objects and verb forms, their manner of being negated and broken . . . [and] the requisite generality of principles" (Clark, 471). Clearly, if Clark is right in his allegations, it is certainly absurd to think that conditionals could in any way be principles of inference. Here I will not try to argue for the view that they are; I am only interested in clearing the way for such an argument (to be presented elsewhere) by evaluating Clark's most impressive array of counter-arguments.

I. It is quite obvious that conditional sentences are not always employed to formulate rules. A rule is essentially formulated by means of a sentence which contains a typically "rulish" word, like 'permissible', 'forbidden', 'duty', 'may', 'ought', 'obligatory', even 'possible', 'impossible', 'necessary', 'required', etc. And it is fairly obvious that most conditional sentences do not typically contain any such words.

By a statement we primarily mean an assertion of fact, an assertion belonging to descriptive discourse. A rule, on the other hand, belongs to prescriptive discourse, that is, the language employed in guiding behaviour. Thus, we usually contrast a rule with a statement. Hence, on this use a conditional statement is not a rule; *a fortiori*, a conditional statement is not a rule of inference.

[1] Further references to these essays will be indicated by citing the appropriate page number after the name of the author. I follow Quine (*Methods of Logic*, p. 12 *et al.*) and Bernard Mayo ("Conditional Statements", *Philosophical Review*, LXVI (1957), pp. 291–303) in preferring the term 'conditional'. My reason is that the word 'hypothetical' has a more specialized meaning in the phrase 'hypothetical imperative', since Kant introduced it.

Nevertheless, we do speak of principles in such a way that a principle does not have to be a rule. We customarily mean by a principle a fundamental presupposition or a very general law or that which explains or justifies something: " the principles of geometry ", " the principles of thermodynamics ", " the principle of evil ". Thus, there may be a sense in which conditional statements function as principles without this requiring that they be rules (of inference). Perhaps Ryle is at fault for not having made clear in what sense conditionals *are* principles or licences. Yet he may be right in saying that " when I learn ' if *p*, then *q* ', I am learning that I am authorized to argue ' *p*, so *q* ', *provided that I get my premise* ' *p* ' " (Ryle, 334). For even though it may be false that conditional statements are rules, yet it may be true that conditional sentences *convey* rules without formulating them. A red light is not a command or an order, and it is plainly absurd to ask about the " rulish " or imperative term in a red light—yet when a person comes to a red light at a street corner he comes to be under a police order to stop.

More specifically, as logic textbooks show, one of the standard techniques to prove that the inference ' *p*, so *q* ' is deductively valid consists in establishing that the conditional statement ' if *p*, then *q* ' is analytic or logically true. That is to say, to know that the conditional is analytic is to know that one is entitled or licensed to make the inference ' *p*, so *q* '. Thus, at least for some conditional statements it seems to be true that (i) they are not rules of inference, yet (ii) they can be said to function as principles of inference in the sense that to know that they hold is like being in possession of a rule of inference, or a justification for inferences of a certain kind.

In general, we can distinguish between what is formulated in a sentence and what is expressed or conveyed by it. Rules can only be formulated in " rulish " or normative sentences; statements are formulated in descriptive sentences. But, I want to suggest, a conditional non-rulish sentence, which formulates a conditional statement, may express or convey a rule of inference in a manner not altogether different from the way a sentence formulating a command may also convey that it pleases the commander to see the recipient of the command act. When that happens (if at all) I shall say that the conditional statement *junctions as a principle of inference*; for at the level of formulation, the conditional statement is all we have when and if the conditional sentence is uttered, yet in a sense (if the suggestion can

be established) nothing more is needed to " see " or appreciate that a certain inference is valid. The statement would then act, as it were, as a proxy for the rule—at the level of formulation. Or, considering the two levels, one should perhaps say that there is (as it were) a ghost or a shadow of the rule trailing the statement. Clearly, the sentences we are considering are primarily used to formulate and only secondarily to express.

These metaphors are only intended to give an imprecise, but not too vague, idea of how the three terms ' formulates ', ' expresses ' and ' functions as a principle ' are related. I shall on occasion abbreviate ' conditional statement ' to ' conditional '. And as said above, there is no argument here for the suggestion that conditionals may function as principles (though some material for one is contained in section II). But we should remember that analytic conditionals certainly seem to function as principles of inference. My point is that if the suggestion is correct, Clark's main argument against Ryle to the effect that a conditional is not a rule cannot invalidate Ryle's thesis, which he formulated in terms of principles, licenses, warrants, tickets—not of rules. But let us turn our attention to Clark's specific arguments.

II. One of Clark's impressive observations is that Ryle completely forgot to mention those inferences of the form ' if *p*, then *q*; so, *q* '. It does seem that in such inferences the *premise*, not the principle, is the conditional ' if *p*, then *q* '. Clark objects that " one could just as well say that possessing ' *p* ', one is entitled to infer ' *q* ', provided that he gets ' if *p*, then *q* ' as to say the other [as Ryle does in] (p. 334) ". (Clark, 462). In all fairness it should be said that Clark is just objecting to one of Ryle's arguments. However, if his observation has as much force as he thinks, Clark's charge goes beyond Ryle's argument to reach Ryle's thesis. Indeed, if, as Ryle claims, conditionals are principles of inference, there should be a difference between inferences of the form ' If *p*, then *q*; so *q* ' and those of the form ' *p*, so *q* '. The former, but not the latter, are enthymemes; in the latter, but not in the former, the justifying principle is made explicit. Of course, the simple fact that the two forms of inference exist in ordinary language or thinking is not a proof that Ryle is mistaken. But Clark is quite right in pointing out that the two types do coexist in ordinary thinking. Unfortunately, he does not discuss the possibility of a difference between the two types; he does not even offer a

single example of the former. Let us correct the situation by considering the following cases:

(a) If he is sick, he won't go. So, he won't go.
But is he sick?
Yes, he's sick. That's *why* I said that he won't go.

(b) He's sick; so, he won't go.
Won't he go if he's sick?
That's *what* I said, didn't I?

It seems clear that there is an important difference. In case (a), the question " But *is* he sick? " is legitimate, even though the speaker feels or may feel that the questioner could or should have suspected that it was *implicitly* answered in his utterance. In case (b), the speaker feels that the question is out of place; in a sense the questioner is asking for a repetition, whereas his question shows clearly that he understood what was said. Since the truth of the conditional validates the inference, if the questioner understood the inference he knows that a claim has been made concerning the truth of the conditional, so that no progress is made by requesting the assertion of the conditional. If the case is that he just does not feel sure, then the question is proper; but in that case, he should say something like " Do you mean to say that if he's sick he won't go? ", which puts the locus of the question outside the conditional. Furthermore, note that in (a) even if the speaker feels a little bit impatient with his hearer's obtuseness or cleverness, he will never go so far as to deny that the questioner is asking for a reason (why).

III. Clark's most powerful argument has been mentioned, namely, that conditionals are not rules or principles because they lack certain features rules have, particularly, their need for certain " rulish " terms and their mode of application (Clark, 464 ff.). His objection is sound, except that conditionals may still *function as* principles in the sense characterized. He argues that conditionals cannot be conformed to or violated whereas " one can deliberately flout a parking regulation by breaking the law and running the risk of a court summons " (Clark, 465). True, there are no courts of logic, nor logic detectives nor policemen; and nobody has reason to fear a summons for the violation of any logical rule. But this of course applies to *all* rules of logic, and has nothing to do with the issue whether conditional statements function as principles of inference or not.

However, one can flout the principle of inference conveyed by a conditional sentence: whenever one commits the fallacy of asserting the consequent, or alternatively, the fallacy of denying the antecedent. And propagandists of any creed may commit those fallacies in full awareness of their logical violation.

IV. Clark argues that the verbs 'comply with', 'obey', 'conform to', take as objects 'the rule', 'the instructions', 'the command', but *not* 'the hypothetical statement'. This argument is inconclusive. For if conditional statements function as principles, it is not the statement but the rule expressed by the sentence that also formulates the statement, which is complied with or not conformed to.

Clark argues that we say 'I am commanded to', 'I am authorized to', 'I am instructed to', but we do *not* say 'I am conditionally stated to'. This seems to be misplaced for we do *not* say 'I am ruled to' or 'I am principled to' either. Thus, 'conditional statement' is like 'principle' and 'rule' in not having the passive construction that 'command', 'licence', etc. have.

V. Clark also argues that conditionals lack the manner of being negated which is proper of principles. He says that there are two ways of negating a principle or a rule: one which he seems inclined to call "negation" *simpliciter*, and the other which he calls "cancellation". For example, "Advance!" is simply negated by "Do not advance!" and is cancelled by "You do not have to advance" (Clark, 466). He asserts that "a principle, or supposed principle, yields in turn a principle by the application of one of the forms of negation. The application of the other form of negation yields an expression which is not a principle at all. But there is no similar move by which we negate a *hypothetical statement* yielding an expression which is not a statement at all, but some other mode of discourse" (Clark, 467; my italics). If this is true, it would seem that a conditional cannot function as a principle of inference. Let us grant that principles can be negated in two ways such that in one we get a principle, but in the other we obtain something which is not a principle. But why should a form of negation of a *conditional statement* (or a sentence) yield something which is not a statement (or sentence), instead of just yielding something which is not a *conditional* statement (or sentence)? As a matter of fact, we could speak of two ways of negating a conditional, say, "If

he comes, he will leave a message": (i) one in which we obtain another conditional: "If he comes, he will leave no message", and (ii) another in which we obtain something which is not a conditional at all: "He will come and leave no message", or "He may come without leaving a message", or "Even though he comes, he will leave no message" (Ryle and Mayo prefer the second and third forms.)

VI. Another of Clark's stronger arguments is that principles are general, whereas conditionals can be very definite. This is important; for if principles are essentially general, how can a conditional like "If Tom loves you, Cynthia, he will telephone you" be a principle of inference? Everything in it is singular or constant. As Clark points out, a "rule . . . carries the grammatical apparatus which is reflected in the logician's quantifiers and which is lacking in those 'meaty' and determinate" conditionals (Clark, 469 f.). There is no denying that this is another conclusive argument against the view that conditional *statements* are rules. But can they function as principles? A principle of inference is general, not because it justifies more than one inference, but because it can justify all inferences of a certain kind. Clearly, as Ryle has argued, there is a sense in which inferences are performances or acts (surely, they are a good deal more). It is quite correct, and it may also be true, to say that Cynthia inferred today at 7, that Tom did not love her; she may remember that it was today when she inferred that, just after her mother spoke to her. One may remember making the inference, even though one may have forgotten what was the exact conclusion. One may infer the same conclusion a few days later. The point is that the conditional "If Tom loves you, he will telephone you" as a principle of inference justifies Cynthia's inferences of the form "Tom loves me, so he will telephone" or "Tom never telephoned, so he does not love me", *whenever* she makes them, and for that matter *all* inferences of the form "Tom loves Cynthia, so he will telephone her" drawn by any other person.

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IDENTITY AND EXACT SIMILARITY

By C. B. MARTIN

IN the first part of this paper I shall criticise some arguments in Mr. B. A. O. Williams' article "Personal Identity and Individuation".[1] In the second part I shall attempt to make clear some ambiguities in the use of the phrase "exactly similar" that are of vital relevance to the problem of identity.

I. Mr. Williams introduces what has become almost a stock kind of puzzle case. It is the case of a man, Charles, who, after sleeping, wakes seeming to remember having witnessed "certain events and doing certain actions which earlier he did not claim to remember; and who, under questioning, could not remember witnessing other events and doing other actions which earlier he did remember". These witnessings of events and doings of actions are part of the life history of one and only one person—Guy Fawkes.

"If it is logically possible that Charles should undergo the changes described, then it is logically possible that some other man should simultaneously undergo the same changes; e.g. that both Charles and his brother Robert should be found in this condition. What should we say in that case? They cannot both be Guy Fawkes; if they were, Guy Fawkes would be in two places at once, which is absurd. Moreover, if they were both identical with Guy Fawkes, they would be identical with each other, which is also absurd. Hence we could not say that they were both identical with Guy Fawkes. We might instead say that one of them was identical with Guy Fawkes, and that the other was just like him; but this would be an utterly vacuous manoeuvre, since there would be *ex hypothesi* no principle determining which description was to apply to which. So it would be best, if anything, to say that both had mysteriously become like Guy Fawkes, clairvoyantly knew about him, or something like this. If this would be the best description of each of the two, why would it not be the best description of Charles if Charles were changed?"

Williams goes on to say that because "we could not speak of identity" in the case of Charles and Robert this does not prove

[1] *Aristotelian Society Proceedings*, 1956–7.

that we " cannot speak of identity " in the case of Charles alone. Then he goes on, " Certainly it is no proof. Yet the argument does indicate that to speak of identity in the simpler case would be at least quite vacuous ".

It is hard to see the force of Williams' argument that Charles and Robert " cannot both be Guy Fawkes; if they were, Guy Fawkes would be in two places at once, which is absurd. Moreover, if they were both identical with Guy Fawkes, they would be identical with each other, which is also absurd ". This argument cannot possibly hold against the assertion that Guy Fawkes has become Charles and Robert or the assertion that Charles and Robert have in the past had an identical life history. This is evident if we consider the case of an amoeba that divides into two.[1] The original amoeba has become two and these two have in the past had an identical life history, namely when they were one. We understand perfectly well how what has become two is able to be in two places at once, and how though the two divisions are not identical with each other they are identical with the original undivided amoeba. That is, a full life history of any one of the two amoebae would include reference to the original amoeba in a way in which the full life history of two other exactly similar amoebae would not. The criterion of identity that Williams is anxious to defend, bodily continuity, is applicable (whether we apply it or not) right back to the original amoeba.[2] On the basis of Williams' argument we should be forced to say that the two amoebae are merely exactly similar to and in no way to be identified with the original amoeba. Yet this would be straightforwardly false. Therefore Williams' argument is invalid.

Unfortunately, Williams has not made enough of a puzzle of his case. As he describes it, I think even the newspapers might agree with his conclusion, though this does not correct the invalidity of his arguments. A more seductive case can be devised.

Let us suppose that person A completely disappears without trace, vanishes into thin air, passes out of existence.[3] Persons B

[1] It might be said that each of the two amoebae is identical with parts of the original amoeba. I do not think that this is an objection to anything I say.

[2] The amoeba is in this way different from the mother and child. At any stage in the reproductive process the child can be set beside the mother. This is why we don't think of the case as one in which what was one (mother) has become two (mother and child).

[3] To say " pass out of existence " is to say more than " disappear without trace ", yet I do not see how it is necessarily an irrational thing to say. It may be as well to point out that for anyone who holds strictly to the spatio-temporal continuity criterion for identity, it will be as impossible to say that something disappeared from one place and appeared in another place without any *journeying* as it will be to say that something ceased to exist and then began to exist again.

and C appear out of thin air. They exactly resemble A in every possible way; they have similar bodies, they seem to remember doing what A alone did, etc., etc.

Now a more forceful argument in defence of Williams' thesis may be introduced here. It may be said that the case of Charles and Robert (or better still, B and C) and the case of the amoebae are different. The difference between saying " The two amoebae are merely exactly similar to the original " and saying " The original became two " is established by means of bodily continuity. The difference between saying " B and C are merely exactly similar to A ", and saying "A became B and C ", cannot be established by means of bodily continuity, because A completely disappeared and is supposed to have passed out of existence. Therefore, to say that B and C are the same as A is just to say that they are exactly similar to A. This argument is very nearly right, but it is misleadingly put.

Those who make bodily continuity essential to identity stress that if in the case of B and C we say they are the same as A, that is, A become two, we are cutting the use of " same " loose from the criterion of bodily continuity and therefore changing its sense. This is true. But they go too far when they say that here the sense of " same " just comes to the sense of " exactly similar ". For they imply that, as a description of this peculiar case, " exactly similar " had undergone no change of sense. But it has. We must look more closely at this phrase.

II. (1) " Exactly similar " may be used so as to be utterly neutral to the problem of identity. It may just describe bodily and mental characteristics. One might say, " I don't know whether that chap over there is the same as the fellow we met last night or not but they are exactly similar."

One also might say, "Alfred in 1951 is exactly similar to Alfred in 1956." In this case, " exactly similar " does not rule out " same ".

(2) " Exactly similar " may also be used in *contrast* to " same ". It would then be used in the same way as the less ambiguous phrase " merely exactly similar ".

Bert in 1956 may be exactly similar to Alfred in 1951 and we may say of him " exactly similar to Alfred in 1951 ", as a way of distinguishing him from Alfred. This sense is at home in those situations in which the contrast with " same " or " identical " is straightforward. We say " This pearl is exactly similar to the one you had yesterday." We mean it is not the same, and that it

could be placed side by side with the other if it could be found or if it had not dissolved in acid. We mean also that its life history is not connected with the other.

But suppose Merlin presented me with a pearl of great beauty. Taking note of his smile when giving it to me, I wait for the unexpected. Of one thing I am sure, it is no ordinary pearl. Yes, at regular or irregular intervals it disappears and reappears. Or *must* it be a different, though exactly similar, pearl each time? I see no necessity here. Surely another question is of great relevance. If the pearl that Merlin gave had not disappeared would I now hold a host of pearls that came from nowhere? If A had not disppeared, would B and C have appeared?

In this second sense " exactly similar " carries with it the notion of actual or possible comparison (putting side by side) at the same time. It is this feature that marks " exactly similar " off from " same " or " identical ". It is not possible to put a thing side by side with itself (the same or identical thing). We cannot in *this way* compare Alfred in 1951 with himself in 1951 or 1956.

If we are to compare something X in 1956 with something else Y in 1951 we must allow that Y has or might have continued to exist without changing any of the features that we consider important until 1956 so that it at that time could be set beside X.

If Y had ceased to exist in 1952 and we suppose contrary to fact that Y had continued to exist and that if Y had continued to exist X would still have existed in 1956, then it follows that X and Y are not the same or identical, though they may be exactly similar.

The case of Merlin's pearl and the case of B and C may now be judged.

Are we to say that the pearl that appears is the same as the original pearl or that the disappearance of the original is causally related to the appearance of another pearl exactly similar to the first?[1] Are we to say that B and C are the same as A, that is, that they are A become two, or that the disappearance of A is causally related to the appearance of two different things B and C exactly similar to A?

Whatever we say, it is essential to see that the sense of " same " and the sense of " exactly similar " have *both* undergone a change when applied to these peculiar cases.

Ordinarily, " same " carries with it as criterion something

[1] I do not mean these alternatives to be exhaustive. They are the important ones for my purposes.

of bodily continuity. It does not do so when applied to these cases.

Ordinarily, " exactly similar " carries with it as criterion actual or possible comparison (putting side by side) at the same time. It does not do so when applied to these cases.

If someone were to ask me what should be said here, " same " or " merely exactly similar ", I think that I should tell him to flip his own coin.

This sounds and is a little too cavalier. It over-emphasises the element of conventionality. After all, there could be reason for adopting one convention rather than another. If it often happened that when something disappeared something *very* different appeared, we would probably say that one thing's appearance was caused by the other's disappearance instead of saying that the same thing appeared again. If this sort of thing were a regular feature of the world, and if on one occasion something disappeared and something exactly like it appeared, we would probably still say that one thing's appearance was caused by the other's disappearance instead of saying that the same thing appeared again.

However, if it were a regular feature of the world that things disappeared and exactly similar things appeared, and if a thing's disappearance were necessary for the exactly similar thing's appearance (so that if the thing had not disappeared but continued to exist, the exactly similar thing would not have appeared to be set beside it[1]) then we might, partly for economy's sake, say " same ".

It is such things as this that would incline us to adopt one convention rather than another. What is shocking and hard to accept is that there is such an element of verbal legislation and linguistic convention concerning the identity of people and physical objects when their situation is described in terms of the puzzle cases. We are inclined to think that our ordinary concepts of " same " and " different but exactly similar " must be ready-made for application to any situation. This is not so. They do however serve us admirably well in the world as it is.

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[1] Notice that a necessary negative criterion for the ordinary concept of " same ", namely " cannot be set side by side ", is available here. It is the absence of the criterion of spatio-temporal continuity (that is also necessary to the ordinary concept of " same ") that inclines me to say that when applied to such a case " same " is a different concept.

KNOWING WHAT I MEAN

By PETER MAKEPEACE

WAISSMANN[1] has argued in favour of Lichtenberg's neologism "It thinks in me" as a felicitous linguistic extemporisation for describing a feature of thinking which conventional grammar forbids us to describe. Price,[2] too, reviewing arguments in favour of the "Classical" theory of thinking and against the "Symbolist" theory, has spoken of "bare, naked thinkables" which are apt to "overflow" the symbols used to express them. Now it is true that such statements as "I know what I mean but I don't know how to say it" express a kind of perplexity and frustration with which everyone is familiar. They seem, moreover, to corroborate the view advocated by Waissmann and entertained by Price, that there is a sort of subliminal activity or process of "thinking" or "knowing what one wants to say" such that (i) it precedes, and (ii) it is logically independent of, verbal expression; (iii) it is not under the thinker's control, or only to a very limited extent; yet (iv) it is accessible to some kind of inspection. I wish to suggest an interpretation of "I know what I mean but I don't know how to say it" which does not commit us to these conclusions.

Take first the case of trying to remember somebody's name. "It's on the tip of my tongue, but . . .." The type of perplexity or frustration is much the same. But can the perplexity find a corresponding description? We would not say "I know what I want to say, but I don't know how to say it": rather, we would say, "I know his name, but I can't for the moment recall it". If knowing is having learnt (*that* or *how*) and not forgotten, not knowing may be either not having learnt, or having learnt but having forgotten. The two possibilities correspond roughly to our two cases. The name-perplexity seems to proceed from defective memory; the other kind proceeds rather from defective schooling.

How do I know that there *is* something that I don't know how to express? Why am I not content to remain in relaxed silence, but must needs struggle to speak? The answer is easy on the "pre-verbal thinking" view. According to this, there

[1] 'Analytic-Synthetic VI', ANALYSIS 13.4 (March 1953), p. 80.
[2] *Thinking and Experience*, ch. X.

are two processes going on as a rule, either side by side or in tandem: a thought-process, and a speaking or silent soliloquy; and the latter either is or is not an adequate expression of the former. My consciousness of its inadequacy is expressed by saying something like " No, that's not what I mean; I know what I do mean, but it's not that "; I could not know this unless I were conscious of an inadequacy, and in order to know that something is or is not adequate to express something else, I must surely have independent access to both the somethings: to my own words and to the thought-processes.

But why should not a similar hypothesis be felt to be necessary in the case of the forgotten name? How do I know that the name *is* on the tip of my tongue? Might it not make equally good sense to say that I must have some sort of non-verbal access to the name, in order that I should know that it *was* on the tip of my tongue rather than, say, at the back of my mind, or clean forgotten? This hypothesis would be absurd, and anyway no such hypothesis is required to explain the use of expressions like " on the tip of my tongue ". But why is it, in the other case, neither (a) absurd nor (b) dispensable?

(a) It does not seem patently absurd that I can both have access to, and not have access to, what I am thinking, because there may be different modes of access. While there is only one mode of access to a name, that is, a linguistic access, there may be a non-linguistic access to other objects, to "naked thinkables", to which we also have a linguistic access (though an imperfect one). (b) The two-process hypothesis seems to be indispensable just because the notion of *adequacy* is required in this context, but not in the other.

" Inadequacy of language " is both a vague and an ambiguous expression. Two ambiguities are of special importance. (1) What I don't know how to say, somebody else may. Sometimes, indeed, I reject proffered assistance by protesting, " No, that's not what I mean "; but there are also occasions when I exclaim with relief, " Yes, of course that's just what I was trying to say —you've hit on the right way of putting it ". In cases like this, we are not claiming that language in general is inadequate to the task of saying what we want said: we are admitting only our own linguistic incompetence which somebody else, better schooled in linguistic performance than we, can help us to overcome. (This is the sort of difficulty which young children experience more frequently and unmistakably than adults.)

But there is, of course, the more radical claim that language

itself is inadequate to say what I want said: a claim that no one else could say it either: a rejection in advance of all possible help, short of drastic measures doing violence to current vocabulary, grammar or syntax. If we call these two senses of " inadequacy " A and B, it is clear that language which is inadequate in sense B must be inadequate in sense A, but not *vice versa*. (According to Waissmann, no language is absolutely inadequate even in sense B: provided that we are allowed unlimited powers of innovation.) I shall be concerned mainly with the milder claim (A).

The second ambiguity involves the question " Inadequate for what? " There are as many different kinds of inadequacy, as there are different jobs which language can be expected to perform, different demands that can be made of it. Unless we specify which demands we have in mind, it is vacuous to talk about inadequacy. But which demands do we have in mind? If we take a simple and well-standardised task, the task of describing, no special difficulties arise about the notion of inadequacy. A child's language is inadequate to describe the British Constitution; an archbishop's language is (probably) inadequate to describe the mechanism of a liquid-fuel rocket engine; no existing language (perhaps) is adequate to describe the functioning of the brain and central nervous system. There certainly are things that " beggar description ". In general, there are similarities and differences in the world which any given individual's linguistic resources, even the combined resources of all the speakers of a given language, are incapable of describing. English is inadequate (at least without circumlocution) to describe the kinds of locomotion described by Russian verbs of motion; while Russian (so I am informed) is inadequate (by reason of conflicting rules of syntax and inflection) to describe such an event as *meeting all of my twenty-one uncles*. Finally, there may be features which even the combined resources of all existing languages are incapable of describing. But since there is no logical limit either to our powers of discrimination or to our powers of linguistic innovation, there is no intrinsic inadequacy of language as such, relative to the descriptive demand. As far as that goes, Waissmann is perfectly right.

But what is the relation between this kind of inadequacy and the kind expressed by " I don't know how to put into words what I want to say "? The answer is that there need be no connection at all. If my " thinking " consists in becoming aware of or attending to one of those linguistically inaccessible

similarities or differences just mentioned, then indeed the two kinds of inadequacy are the same. I can't describe the feature I have noticed, because there just isn't the word; I must either learn it, or invent it. But if the disparity between thought and speech is some peculiar inexpressibility of thought as such—if, as Price puts it, thought always " overflows the symbols " or there is always more going on in my head than I am ever able to put into words—then there may be no relation whatever between the inadequacy of language to describe, and the inadequacy of language to express.

Even in the case where they do coincide, how do I know that there *is* an inadequacy? Not by catching myself thinking about what I have noticed, and comparing the thought-process (the " naked thinkables ") with my linguistic fumblings to express it: but simply by comparing a feature of the world with a feature of my language. Those who have wanted to speak of independent thought-processes have perhaps been overawed by the question, " How can we possibly compare the world with our language, in respect of adequacy to describe? " and have fallen back on thoughts as somehow less intractable than the world. But the question " How can I tell whether language is adequate to express a thought? " is no less puzzling than the question, " How can I tell whether language is adequate to describe a feature of the world? ". And in fact it is more puzzling. In both cases we *seem* forced to say that a criterion of linguistic adequacy demands some kind of " ideal language ": how can we say that S (in the natural language L) adequately describes F or expresses T, unless there is some formula $\mathfrak{S}$ in the ideal language $\mathfrak{L}$ with which we can compare S and so judge of its adequacy? And this would mean that, for every feature of the world, there would be just one correct description, for every thought there would be just one correct expression.

The alternative is to say that, in either case, we can compare two things without having to compare each of them with a third; we can decide that S_1 describes F better than S_2 does, without invoking $\mathfrak{S}$ as *the* description of F. And so with thoughts. But while we can discuss, argue and agree about the adequacy of certain language forms to describe certain facts, we cannot do this with thoughts. There is an extra puzzle, or rather a residual puzzle, about expressing thoughts: we all have access to the facts, but only I have access to my thoughts; we are all in a position to adjudicate between S_1 and S_2 as descriptions of F, but only I am in a position to adjudicate between them as

expressions of T. Yet if T is in fact what I am thinking about F, the judgment about S_1 and S_2 will be the same as it would have been if I were judging them as descriptions of F; but if T is not about a public fact how can I tell whether S_1 or S_2 is the better expression, since no one can have taught me about Ts of this sort? Does not this imply that there must be independent thought-processes, to the existence and nature of which I alone can testify, and which certain verbal formulae just are either adequate or not adequate to express, a fact which I am somehow able to recognise straight off, without the need for schooling?

But what is it to accept or reject a verbal formula as an adequate expression of a thought, feeling or experience? Simplifying somewhat, to accept or reject it is not to recognise an explicit congruence or incompatibility, for bits of language cannot, it is true, be compared with bits of thought, in the way in which bits of maps can be compared with bits of country. (The Correspondence Theory of Truth, correct as it is, in essentials, for describing, is certainly not correct for expressing.) To reject the formula is to say " No, that's not what I thought, felt, etc.". and to accept it is to say " Yes, that's just what I did mean, how I did feel, etc.". But what prompts me to say this? Not the fact that I have carried out some internal inspection or measuring-test; but the fact that I have had a further experience. My knowledge that a verbal formula does or doesn't express how I felt, is just as much a matter or experience as the original feeling was. In fact it is itself one of the ways, perhaps even the only way, in which I have access to the original feeling. Knowing how I felt on a given occasion, even knowing how I felt just now, is, in part, being able to accept or reject certain verbal formulae purporting to express what I felt. Similarly, knowing what I was thinking or am now thinking is, in part, being able to accept or reject verbal formulae purporting to express what I was or am thinking. The situation where I find myself rejecting all verbal formulae which occur or are offered to me, and which purport to express what I am now thinking or meaning or wanting to say, is the situation where " I know what I mean but I don't know how to say it ". I do know, in one sense, what I mean, because I am able to reject certain sentences; I don't know, in another sense, because I reject them all.

A hungry but fastidious infant does know, in one sense, what he wants, because he rejects certain proffered foods; in another sense, he doesn't know, because he rejects them all. What is going on inside certainly needs to be described by means

of verbs whose subject is an impersonal " it " rather than the name or pronoun of the person concerned. Whether the verbs of acceptance and rejection, too, should have an impersonal subject, I am not sure. The trouble about thinking is that it often comprises (among many other things as well) both the indeterminate goings-on and the quite different processes of accepting and rejecting verbal formulae.

TAUTOLOGIES AND THE PARADIGM-CASE ARGUMENT

By R. HARRÉ

J. W. N. Watkins' objections to the Paradigm-Case Argument (PCA) (ANALYSIS 18.2, p. 25 ff. and p. 41 ff.) are not well framed. He alleges that the PCA is productive only of tautologies and hence is trivial. Yet as a matter of fact there are no tautologies either in the argument or in Watkins' objections to it. (This does not mean that objections to the PCA cannot be sustained.)

There are two sorts of locution which Watkins seems to want to call tautologous. He says (p. 41) " he (the upholder of the PCA) renders his assertion that this term *is* instantiated a tautology "; that is, the *meta*-expression " The term ' free-will ' is instantiated " is the tautology upon which the PCA founders. Then on the same page he says " But the proponent of free-will who ' proves ' his case by *defining* ' free-will ' to mean such things as marrying under no social pressure scores a pyrrhic victory: what he says is incontestable because he does not say anything ". It looks from this passage as if Watkins means the PCA *definition* of " free-will " to be the objectionable tautology. But if the term is defined by reference to a paradigm case this does not amount to the utterance of a tautology, for in a definition no statement is uttered and hence no tautologous statement is uttered. Ostensive definitions, such as those to which Watkins seems to refer, are verbal performances comparable to " I name this child Willy ". If you point to a *situation* or to a *thing* and say " This is an exercise of free-will " or " This is red " you may be defining " free-will " or " red " but you are not uttering a tautology or a statement that could be construed as a tautology. Merely to *say* " This is an exercise of free-will " does nothing until the performance is completed by an act of pointing to some piece of behaviour, so that " this " can be given a temporary location.

What can be claimed is that the PCA presents us with a series of meta-statements. These are not, of course, tautologous since they serve to tell us whether or not a certain term is *in fact* instantiated. They may be trivial if the instantiation is by simple *fiat*, but the fact that interesting expressions like " free-will " can be argued about at all suggests that in these cases the

triviality is not immediately obvious. It is still a question whether the meta-statements of a typical PCA are sufficiently trivial for the argument to be disregarded. This is because the logical structure of any PCA is much more complicated than either Watkins in his attack on the argument or Flew in his defence of it (ANALYSIS 18.2, p. 34 ff.) seem to allow.

Consider an analogy: suppose someone were to claim " 'Willy' isn't a name ". This would have to be established via the statement " There is no one and never has been anyone called 'Willy' ". A satisfactory refutation of this claim could be made by examining parish registers in which the performances of naming ceremonies are recorded. From the page headed *Christenings* and the entry " Willy Smith; April 1st, 1900 " the statement upon which a refutation of the sceptic's claim is based can be derived, namely " There is or was someone called " Willy ' ". From this the statement that refutes the claim follows; " 'Willy' *is* a name ". But there is a further step. The objector to the use of " Willy " as a name may change his ground when shown that someone was once in fact called " Willy " and simply claim that " Willy " isn't any sort of name to give a child. The following logical elements are present in the example:—(1) performance, the act of christening; (2) record of performance, the entry in the parish register; (3) material meta-statement, someone did bear the name; (4) linguistic meta-statement, the vocable in question is a name; (5) linguistic recommendation, this vocable ought (n't) to be a name.

A PCA has a parallel logical complexity. It starts by assuming that a metaphysical argument usually ends with a claim at the level of a material meta-statement; e.g. " There are no acts called ' acts of free-will ' ". The PCA to refute this claim goes as follows:—(1) " This (pointing) is an act of free-will " (performance); (2) "*Free-will*: the power of acting when not under constraint" (entry in a PCA "dictionary"; the record of the performance); (3) " There are acts called ' acts of free-will ' " (material meta-statement); (4) " The term ' free-will ' is instantiated " (linguistic meta-statement). This is as far as the PCA will carry us with undiminished logical rigour. But the metaphysical sceptic's claim could be improved in the form " There are no acts *properly* called ' acts of free-will ' "; and for the PCA to refute *this* claim it must be carried on to (5) " There are acts which *ought* to be called ' acts of free-will ' ". Now (5) does not follow with logical rigour from any of (1), (2), (3) or (4)

or any combination of them. This shows that no PCA can be used logically to defeat a metaphysical sceptic provided that he frames his objection deontologically, as a recommendation.

One further point. PCAs are always liable to undermining by the discovery of new facts. A medieval believer in the heliocentric hypothesis could have been refuted by a keen PCA-man simply by having the sun pointed out to him as it moves across the sky while at the same time the words " The sun goes round the earth " were uttered. I am inclined to think that *one* of the reasons a metaphysical sceptic says " There are no acts properly called ' acts of freewill ' " is that he is impressed by the enormous number of new facts that have lately been found about the springs of human action. These facts would count against just that part of a PCA that is *not* logically connected with indisputable performances and meta-statements, for the sceptic is surely saying " Faced with all the facts about the genesis of human action we oughtn't to go on using the expression ' free-will ' ".

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